Every Morning

ROBERT CLUETT

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EVERY MORNING

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Scripture Readings and Prayers for Family or Individual Worship

ROBERT CLUETT

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book of morning devotions which has been so carefully prepared by Mr. Cluett will receive, I am sure, a very grateful reception from those into whose hands it falls, for it has been prepared with a degree of care and a knowledge of the use of Scripture truths which will warm the heart, enlighten the mind, and quicken response.

We are thinking today more than in recent years of the quiet hour and gaining anew the true meaning of special meditation. If the Saviour could not do His busy work, condensed into those three years of active service, without constant and repeated retirement in body and in mind that He might meditate and pray, we err in trying to meet our lesser responsibilities by any other method. Well has it been said recently, "We can do nothing before we pray."

We shall find in this volume scriptural truth and prayer closely related thereto by a wisdom in the selection of its topical arrangements which will appeal to all of us, as we consider our need and relate it to the large responsibilities of this day and generation.

When Austin Phelps gave to the world "The Still Hour," there was a timely response in every heart and the many kindred devotional works

which have come from the lives of men of piety and action have ever influenced their day to men's need of possessing their souls in quietness and confidence. The turmoil and disorder we see all about us in our land and abroad; the nebulous matter that clouds our clear vision into the distances—all suggest the need of faith and service which have the receptivity, mentality, and spirituality of photographic plate. The great distances of the heavens and the stars of smaller magnitude are reproduced through the evidence of photography in the present magnifying power, which has opened a new heavens by the adjustments and appliances of the telescope. Thus today the Holy Spirit is showing us the distances and vastnesses and actualities of faith, through the far and near approaches of prayer, influenced and associated with the Word of God.

This little book will open new realms of light and distance to those who meditate thereon, and will not only enrich our Christian experience day by day, but will give us added anticipations of vision in the realm of the divine Word. If our eye be single, He has promised that our whole body shall be full of light. If the Word of God is related aright to the duties of each recurring day, we shall find in "the trivial round, the common task . . . a road to bring us daily nearer God."

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE.

FOREWORD

THERE never was greater need than today for family prayer, and yet it is lacking in many Christian homes. Among the various reasons assigned for this are the following: Not sufficient time before or after breakfast; the need of haste in the morning, to avoid being late at office or school; the feeling on the part of the head of the family that he is not gifted in prayer, and if he were to attempt to conduct family prayer he would be heard saying much the same thing each day, and consequently it would become monotonous to those who heard him.

To meet these possible difficulties, this collection of Scripture readings and prayers has been prepared. Not more than five minutes is required for each reading and prayer.

To add to the interest in the Bible reading, the topic is given each time. An attempt is made to have the prayers in harmony with the Scripture selections, the endeavor being to make practical application of the truths presented. It is hoped this method may tend not only to fix the Bible message in the mind, but also to make practical the use of it in the experience of each day.

The book goes forth with the devout prayer that God will use it in blessing many a Christian home.

ROBERT CLUETT.

EVERY MORNING

THE GLORY OF GOD

Psalm 19

THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. . . .

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

PRAYER

WE bring to Thee, our Father, our offering of praise this Sabbath morning. For Thy protecting care the past week we are grateful, and as we enter upon the Lord's day may we feel the gracious influence of Thy Holy Spirit. We desire to keep the day holy, and to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. We thank Thee that Thou hast set apart one day in seven for rest, when we may lay aside the busy cares of life, and may turn our thoughts more fully to things that have to do with Thy Kingdom. Go with us, we pray Thee, to the place of worship, and may no distracting thoughts keep us from engaging with all our hearts and minds in prayer and praise. We ask for Thy blessing upon Thy servants who preach the Word, and upon all who endeavor to teach it. Graciously remember those who are denied the privilege of uniting with Thy people in public worship. May they find Thee near, and have sweet communion with Thee. Be pleased to bestow Thy blessing upon all the members of our family this day, and may the love of Christ dwell in them richly. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

JESUS TEACHES HUMILITY

John 13: 1–15

NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . .

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, we worship and praise Thy Holy Name for the great gift of Thy Word. As followers of Thine, we ask for grace to endeavor to live in accordance with the teaching of Jesus. May we see in His example of humble service, that He would have us act in a spirit of self-sacrificing humility. We are Thy servants, and when we are called upon for service may we render it gladly, knowing that even the smallest and lowliest service becomes exalted, if offered in the name of Jesus. We are prone to feel our dignity, even when we do not assert it. Help us to walk humbly before Thee, and before our fellowmen. Cleanse our hearts, we beseech Thee, and make them Thy temples, where Thou shalt reign and rule, and may we be true to Thee in all the duties of this day. We realize that too often we manifest a spirit that is not Christlike. Help us in all holy endeavor to lead lives of nearness to Thee, and may we be faithful to the duties of Christian citizenship, and render to the community in which we live that service that will be helpful to all, and that will exalt the name of Jesus Christ. For His sake. Amen.

TUESDAY

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

John 1: 5–10; 2: 1–6

THIS then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . .

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

PRAYER

O GOD, Thou who art the Author of Light, we praise Thee that Jesus came with the message, God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Thou dost give us the privilege of walking in the light, of living lives of holiness, and of having the joy and comfort of the religion of Jesus Christ. As the light of the sun has life-giving qualities, so may the light of Thy truth shine in our hearts and quicken within us right impulses and holy desires. We thank Thee for the great promise that if we confess our sins, Jesus Christ is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Help us to apply the test of fellowship with Him that Thy word gives, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." We would earnestly pray with the Psalmist, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight." Hear our prayer, our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

PRECEPTS AND PROMISES

Matt. 7: 1–12

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

PRAYER

OUR Father, Thou who art the Judge of all men, deliver us, we pray Thee, from harsh judgment of others. Our Lord has said, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Our judgment is sometimes hasty and unkind. As we crave kindly judgment for ourselves, may we avoid unjust judgment and criticism of others. We praise Thee for the many great promises Thou hast given us. We have need to remember that the fulfilment of many of these promises depends upon our attitude regarding them. There is something for us to do. If we ask, we shall receive; If we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be opened unto us. O that we might more fully realize that Thy choicest gifts are within our reach, and that Jesus made the conditions on which we may secure them so plain and simple: Ask, Seek, Knock. We can all do that, O Lord, and then what gracious gifts we shall receive; what marvelous treasure we shall find in Thy fulfilled promises! May we ever turn to Thy promises for comfort and strength. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matt. 28: 16–20; Mark 16: 19, 20

THEN the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. . . .

So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

PRAYER

OUR thoughts turn to Thee, this morning, our Lord and Master, at the very beginning of the day. Our sleep has been undisturbed by illness or danger; our bodily strength has been renewed, and we are physically prepared for our daily tasks. We seek Thy grace, that we may be spiritually prepared for the day's duties. As the disciples of old were commissioned by our risen Lord to go and make disciples of all nations, so are we commissioned to make Him known to those at home, and to those in distant lands. May we strive to make the Saviour known to those about us, by our devotion, and by the practice of the precepts that He teaches. Increase our interest in home and foreign missions. We pray daily for the coming of Thy Kingdom. Give us a larger faith, we beseech Thee, that we may expect our prayers to be answered, and may we do all we can to bring the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are in darkness, and Thy Name shall have the praise, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

FRIDAY

THE GOSPEL IN ANTIOCH

Acts 11: 19–30

NOW they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. . . .

Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.

Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

PRAYER

OUR Lord and Master, our hearts are stirred, not only by what the early disciples suffered in the defense of the religion of Jesus Christ, but also by their courage and their devotion and faith. Sacrificing all in the Saviour's name, and enduring privation, they were enabled by Thee to lay the foundation of the Christian Church. We thank Thee, that though they were first called Christians in derision, the title has become an honored and glorious one. Thou hast called us to be Christians, Christ's followers, and we desire so to live each day that it may be seen that we are striving to walk in the footsteps of Christ, our Saviour. We ask for grace to enable us to exercise self-control. Forbid that any provocation should cause us to be inconsiderate or unkind in what we think or what we do. Help us to discern the good in others, and to see how faulty we ourselves are. O Thou Saviour of men, manifest Thyself in us today. For the sake of Him whom we love, Jesus Christ. Amen.

HEROES OF FAITH

Heb. 11: 17–27

BY faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

PRAYER

THOU God of our fathers, we offer Thee our praise this morning for this record of Old Testament heroes of faith. By Thy grace, they counted nothing too difficult for Thee to do, and in accepting the promises given them they endured hardships and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. May what they achieved in Thy name, make evident to us the wonderful possibilities of faith. No matter how difficult the tasks Thou dost give us to do, may we enter upon them with faith, knowing that nothing is impossible of achievement that Thou dost bid us do. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We ask for Thy blessing upon those who hold official responsibility in our land. May they realize the sacredness of their calling, and may they render faithful service. Help us as citizens to uphold them in every right endeavor, and may our influence always be exerted on the side of righteousness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

KEEPING THE SABBATH

Neh. 13: 15–22

IN those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. . . .

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing i this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

PRAYER

OUR God and Father, we bow in reverent worship and prayer, and we rejoice in the coming of another Sabbath. We have Thy commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and we would make the day not only a day of rest from our busy occupations of the week, but also one of devout praise and worship. As in Nehemiah's day, so now Thy holy day is being profaned, and many are seeking to make it a day of profit and amusement. God grant that the prayers of Thy people may be answered, and that the prevailing disregard of the sacredness of the Sabbath day may cease. We ask for Thy blessing upon the efforts being made to restore the Sabbath to its rightful purpose. We beseech Thee, quicken the consciences of Thy followers, that they themselves may set such examples of obedience to Thy command to keep the day holy, that others may have a larger respect for its sanctity. Manifest Thyself graciously to every company of worshipers today, and may Jesus Christ be praised. Amen.

THE RESURRECTION

Luke 24: 1–12

NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words,

And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

PRAYER

WE praise Thee, our Heavenly Father, for the announcement, "He is risen." We thank Thee for the empty tomb, and for the victory over death gained for us by our Saviour. As we contemplate His mastery over the last enemy, may all fear of death be taken away, and may we be unafraid to go where the feet of Jesus have trod. We can safely trust ourselves and our loved ones to Thy keeping, whether in this life or in the life that is beyond. We rejoice in a living Saviour, and we praise Thee that though He was crucified, dead, and buried, He arose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. We know that our Redeemer liveth, and we pray that He may live in us, and that we may live in Him. We ask for His presence this day in all our undertakings, and may we remember that He is ever ready to come to our aid as Guide and Friend. Hear us, our Father, in His name. Amen.

THE GREAT INVITATION

Rev. 22: 8–17

AND I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, for the vision of heaven Thou didst give Thy beloved disciple John. Open our eyes, we beseech Thee, that we may catch a glimpse of the things Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee. We rejoice in that blessed word, "Come," and in the assurance that the gracious invitation is extended by our Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, and by Thy Church. We praise Thee that the invitation is so broad; that those who hear, those who thirst, and whosoever will, may come. That all nations, kindreds, and peoples may hear the invitation, wilt Thou bless the work of all missionaries of Thy Word, whether in home or foreign lands. Thou hast fulfilled Thy promise of Christ's coming, for He is ever coming to us in our need. He has come with forgiving love, with comfort in sorrow, with healing in sickness, with strength for service, and in blessed companionship. We devoutly pray, Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Acts 12: 1–9

NOW about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, that Thou art ever mindful of Thy children, and that Peter's trust in Thee was so complete that he could sleep calmly while bound and in prison. We thank Thee, too, for the ministering angel Thou didst send, to shatter the chains that bound him and to lead him beyond prison doors. We praise Thee for this gracious answer to the prayers of the Church for Peter's release. Give us, we beseech Thee, a firm trust in Thee, no matter how discouraging the circumstances may be. We know that Thou dost ever behold us, and that Thou art ever ready to give deliverance. We pray Thee, deliver us from the power of the tempter when he seeks to gain control, and may we turn to Thee for strength to gain the victory. We are grateful for Thy goodness toward us as a family, and for the love and helpfulness of each member. May our home be a foretaste of that home which our Lord has gone to prepare for those who love Him. For His sake. Amen.

JESUS THE TRUE VINE

John 15: 1–11

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

PRAYER

WE come into Thy presence this morning, our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. By Thy grace we are privileged to have vital, life-giving union with Christ. As a branch separated from the vine cannot bear fruit, so we are fruitless disciples when separated from Christ. Abiding in Him, we have the promise that we shall bear much fruit to Thy glory. May we manifest the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance. We praise Thee that we may have Jesus abiding in us, and that we may abide in Him. With this blessed relationship, we shall have the joy of our Lord in our hearts, a joy the world can neither give nor take from us. Help us, we entreat Thee, that we may be fruitful and joyful followers of the Master. Be pleased to rule in the hearts of all men, that in their everyday relations the spirit of our Lord shall be made manifest. In His name. Amen.

GOD'S LOVING CARE

Matt. 6: 24–33

NO man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . .

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

PRAYER

INFINITE and Loving Father, help us to treasure these gracious words spoken by our Saviour. How often our hearts are troubled, and how needlessly we allow ourselves to be anxious! Forbid that we should forget that we are the subjects of Thy tenderest care, and may we remember that Thou art our Father and that we are Thy children. Thou who dost give to the flowers of the field their beauty, and who dost clothe the grass of the field, surely Thou dost care for Thy children. The fowls of the air, that neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, are cared for by Thee, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without Thy knowledge. Help us, O Lord, to see the futility of anxiety and care concerning the needful things of each day, and give us grace to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, assured that all needful things will be added unto us. We look to Thee with humble confidence to supply the daily need of both soul and body. May our trust in Thee never be shaken. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LAMB OF GOD

John 1: 19–29

AND this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee this morning, our Father, that Jesus revealed Himself to Thy servant of old as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. He made the great atonement on the cross that we might have remission of our sins. May we not only be moved with compassion as we contemplate His suffering and sacrifice, but may we be impressed anew by the matchless love of Jesus Christ. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Our Lord has said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." What great honor is this, that we should be called the friends of God! Holy Father, help us to follow Thee in humble obedience, and to find delight in doing Thy will. We pray that the compassionate love of Jesus, our Saviour, may be manifested toward all who suffer. To those who are troubled in mind or body, and to those who are carrying heavy burdens, may the presence of Jesus, and His readiness to share their burdens, be very real. For His sake. Amen.

CRYING UNTO GOD

Psalm 77: 1–13

I CRIED unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?

And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, our Father, because of Thy loving kindness we are brought to the beginning of another Sabbath day. We thank Thee for days of work and days of rest. We pray for a clearer understanding of the meaning of Thy holy day, and for a more sincere desire to observe it in a manner that shall be well pleasing to Thee. Create within our hearts a greater longing for spiritual things. We thank Thee that we may know the blessedness of the friendship and fellowship of Jesus Christ, and that we may walk with Him and have His abiding presence. Inspire the preaching and teaching of Thy Word this day. Like seed sown upon good ground, may Thy truth find lodgment in minds and hearts, and bring forth abundant fruit to Thy glory. Help us, Thou Lord of the Sabbath, to gain a spirit of worship and helpfulness, and may mercy and compassion control our motives, that the day may be filled with praise and service, and to Thee we will give the glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE CHILD JESUS

Luke 2: 41–52

NOW his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

PRAYER

MOST Merciful Father, we thank Thee that Jesus was once a little child, and that even in His childhood He was deeply interested in the things of God. May His question ring in our ears today, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" In our eagerness concerning the business of each day, whether in office or shop or home, help us, Lord, not to neglect our Father's business, but to remember that there is no greater thing that we can do than to be occupied in our Master's work. Teach us that we are about our Father's business when we minister to His children in response to the appeal which their need makes. We know that the ways of service are many, and that not a day passes without opportunities for doing good. We commend to Thy loving care those who are dear to us, praying that they may be under the shadow of Thy wings. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

John 1: 35–46

AGAIN the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. . . .

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, we are grateful this morning for the message Thou hast given us. As Jesus spoke to these first disciples, asking, "What seek ye?" so we may believe He often asks us that question. We are ever seeking, sometimes for things we should not desire. May our quest always be for those things that will enrich our lives and make us more efficient in Thy service. Help us, Lord, to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. We give Thee sincere thanks that we have been called to discipleship, and that we may have the privilege of seeking and finding other followers of the Master. We offer Thee our thanksgiving, that, as Jesus sought Philip, so our Saviour sought and found us. He has called us to be His witnesses, and we may testify for Him, both by what we say and by the manner in which we live. We desire to follow Him in humble service, and we would ever be found in ways in which our Lord would have us walk. We devoutly pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed throughout the whole earth. For His sake. Amen.

THE PARALYTIC HEALED

Mark 2: 1–12

AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them. . . .

And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

PRAYER

O LORD Most High, we come to Thee, Thou who art the source of every blessing, praying that Thou wilt cleanse our hearts from all sin, and make them fit for the presence of Thy Holy Spirit. May the lesson this morning teach us afresh that we may bear our friends into the very presence of Jesus, where healing and grace may be found. May we not only feel the stirring of sympathy when we behold suffering and need, but may we also do all in our power for the relief of Thy needy ones. May we count it an exalted privilege thus to walk in the footsteps of our Redeemer, who during His earthly life went about doing good. We know that many doors of usefulness are open to us, and we pray that we may gladly enter them, carrying the spirit of our Master. May Thy healing hand be laid upon those who are suffering because of illness, and may the comfort of Thy presence be vouchsafed to those who sorrow. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

John 6: 5–14

WHEN Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, that Jesus cared not only for the souls of men, but for their bodies also, and that His compassion moved Him to feed the five thousand. We are glad that in performing this great miracle He used what a little boy gave Him. We cannot wonder that of the five loaves and two fishes the disciples asked, "What are they among so many?" Our Heavenly Father, when we are inclined to think that what we have to offer is so small that our Lord can do little with it, help us to take into account what it may accomplish if placed in His hands. Whether what we have be much or little, we pray for grace to offer it gladly when Thou dost ask for it. We would offer Thee ourselves, our hearts, our love, and all that we possess. Our Father, wilt Thou take all, and may it be consecrated to Thy service, and the glory shall be Thine, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PAUL'S LIFE STORY

II Cor. 11: 17–30

THAT which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. . . .

I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, Source of every blessing, forbid that we should bow before Thee simply because it is our habit to pray morning and evening. Rather may we approach Thee because it is our sincere desire to render Thee praise and thanksgiving for all Thy lovingkindness toward us. We thank Thee for the grace given Thy servant Paul that enabled him to endure opposition, beatings, cold, hunger and thirst, and many perils, and that he gloried in tribulations, making little account of them if only he might preach Christ and Him crucified. We ask that we may have some measure of the devotion to our Lord that he manifested, and that we may be willing to suffer if need be for the sake of our Lord and Master. Too often we consider our own pleasure and comfort when some sacrifice is called for. We realize our need of a more complete consecration to Thee and to Thy service. We would love Thee so deeply that we shall not count the cost of any sacrifice for which Thou dost call. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE COMFORT OF JESUS

John 14: 1–11

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

PRAYER

MOST Gracious God, our Father, we thank Thee for these comforting words of Jesus. We need not let our hearts be troubled; we believe in Thee, and in Jesus Christ, our Lord. We praise Thee for the assurance that our Saviour has gone to prepare a place for us, that where He is, there we may be also. We may well express our gratitude that Jesus desires us to be with Him. For this cause He came into the world, that He might draw all men unto Himself. Help us to see that we may be with Him in our daily affairs; we may have His companionship in the home, on the street, and in our everyday occupations. Abide with us, we pray Thee, loving Saviour, and may we be conscious of Thy presence each hour of the day. Help us to do the things we ought to do, and keep us from doing the things we should not do. Only by Thy grace shall we be able to accomplish the work Thou hast assigned us. We thank Thee for the joy of service. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Luke 6: 1–12

AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was a hungered, and they which were with him;

How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. . . .

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

PRAYER

WE come before Thee, our God and Father, to present our offering of adoration and praise. We praise and magnify Thy Holy Name for the glorious hope Thou hast given us, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. May we have grace to interpret rightly what Jesus meant when He said, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." If we ever have any question as to how we should spend the Sabbath, may we seek the answer in Thy Word, and in the example of Jesus during His earthly life. We are not only commanded to keep the day holy, but our Lord has made known what He did on the Sabbath, and we thus learn what use we should make of the day. We may imitate Him by following His custom of worshiping God in His house. We know that on the Sabbath He was wont to minister to those who were suffering from bodily ailments. We can imitate Him in helpful ministrations to Thy children who need comfort and help. We ask that the love of Christ may so govern us this day that each hour shall be filled with praise and service. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A FATHER'S LOVE

Psalm 103: 1–13

BLESS the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

PRAYER

O THOU Almighty One, we praise Thee that Thou dost make Thyself known as a loving Father. We thank Thee for the comfort we have found in the assurance that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. As children, we know the meaning of father and mother, love and pity, and we know that this parental love is but a faint type of Thy great love for Thy children. We would respond to Thy wonderful and unfailing love by striving to render to Thee all the love of which we are capable. How forbearing Thy love for us has been! How great have been Thy mercy and kindness toward us! Thou hast been patient and kind, notwithstanding our waywardness and sin. We humbly crave forgiveness for all our transgressions, and we pray for grace to manifest toward others a spirit of forbearance and kindness. We commend to Thy loving care all those whom we hold dear. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE BEATITUDES

Matt. 5: 1–12

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

PRAYER

OUR Father, make vivid to our eyes this scene of Jesus seated with His disciples and teaching them these great truths. We, too, would sit at His feet, and learn from Him concerning the most blessed things of life. We are poor in spirit, in that we are conscious of sin and in need of forgiveness. To such Thou dost promise Thy Kingdom, Thy rule in heart and life. In mourning, whether for sin or because of some great sorrow, Thou hast given us this great promise of comfort. In meekness and gentleness, seeking the divine will, we have the promise of a rich inheritance. May we know the blessedness of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that our joy may be full. May the mercy that we receive at Thy hands lead us to show a merciful spirit toward others. Help us, our Father, to realize that only the pure in heart can see God. Forbid that our eyes should be so blinded by sin that our vision of Thee should be obscured. Only by Thy grace may we be peacemakers, and be called the sons of God. As Thy followers, may we do all we can to promote Christian ideals in public affairs. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS

Matt. 25: 1–13

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

PRAYER

MOST Gracious Lord and Master, we would approach Thee reverently and with faith. We thank Thee for this parable given by Jesus on the duty of watchfulness, and we pray that the Saviour's words may find lodgment in our minds and hearts. We have need to watch for the coming of our Lord, whether He may come to bid us to share in the joy of service, or whether He may come to share with us our sorrows and disappointments. We ask for Thy grace, that we may be watchful as to what we think or say or do, that in all things we may strive to glorify Thee. We would ever be found watching and waiting for the coming of our Lord. We know not what this day may have in store for us, but we know that Jesus is our Friend, and that it is our privilege to have His companionship. May we not go where we cannot take Him with us, and wilt Thou help us to think of Him in all our relations with others. For His sake. Amen.

WHERE CHRIST DWELLS

John 1: 37–47

AND the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

PRAYER

WE look to Thee, our Heavenly Father, for Thy blessing upon us this morning. We bow in all humility at Thy footstool, asking for the forgiveness of our sins. We need not ask the question the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, where dwellest thou?" We know that our Saviour's dwelling place is not only in heaven, but that we may have Him dwelling in our home and in our hearts. What a gracious privilege is ours, to have Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, as our guest. May He never depart, and may we try to honor Him in all that transpires in our home. We know that where sin is, there He cannot abide. Cleanse our hearts then, that they may be made fit for the Saviour's presence. Wilt Thou shine in our hearts, that we may walk in the light, and be kept in the ways of righteousness all the days of our lives. Whatever may be the events of this day, may nothing separate us from Thee, and from Thy love. We pray for grace to improve every opportunity for service, that we may glorify Thee in all things. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

JESUS AND PETER

John 21: 15–22

SO when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

PRAYER

OUR God and Father, we are grateful for the mercies of another night, and for the blessings that are ours this morning. We ask for Thy blessing upon the reading of Thy Word. We remember that though Peter thrice denied Jesus, a look from the Saviour was sufficient to bring repentance and tears. We praise Thee for the great tenderness of Jesus toward those who fall in temptation. We are glad that we have this record of Peter's thrice repeated affirmation of his love for Jesus Christ. May we listen to our Lord when He asks, "Lovest thou me?" and may we be able to answer as Peter did, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Forbid that our love should be so lukewarm that those about us will fail to recognize it, but may it be so real and find such expression in our daily lives that it will be manifest. We would have less hesitation in speaking to others of the love of our Saviour, and we pray that our fellowship with Him may be so close that we shall have a burning desire to lead others to become His disciples. May His spirit govern those who employ and those who are employed, whether in the home or in places of business. In Jesus' name. Amen.

JESUS IN THE HOME

Luke 7: 36–47

AND one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touched him; for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? . . .

I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we offer Thee our grateful praise that Thou didst establish the home, and that, when our Lord walked among men, He uttered some of His most gracious words and performed some of His greatest miracles in the homes He visited. We do not marvel that He sometimes received costly offerings of gratitude and love. We pray Thee, our Saviour, sanctify our home by Thy presence. May we always find room for Thee, Thou most welcome Guest, and may nothing in our home offend Thee. We bid Thee come, Lord, not as a transient Guest, but to abide with us always. How much we need Thee, not only in the home, but wherever we are and in whatever tasks we engage! Sometimes our tasks seem difficult and discouraging, and we need Thy presence and help, that we may perform them faithfully and well. We believe Thou dost never call us to a service that we cannot render, but with each demand Thy grace is sufficient, if we will but avail ourselves of it. Give us courage and a complete trust in Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

GOD'S FAVOR

Psalm 85

LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin.

Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.

Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.

Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

PRAYER

HOW great is Thy loving kindness, O Lord, how manifold are Thy mercies! Goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives. Thou hast had us in Thy keeping during the past week, and no harm has befallen us. We praise and magnify Thy Holy Name for all Thy mercies toward us, and for the glorious hope of life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Bless Thy people everywhere, and manifest Thyself graciously to all who worship Thee, and may this day be one of gladness and song and praise. Pardon all our transgressions, for the sake of Him who gave Himself for our redemption. May we be spiritually refreshed in our communion with Thee, that we may be better fitted for Thy service during the coming week. Remember, in Thy goodness, all those who are in sore need; supply them plenteously with Thy grace. Give the comfort of Thy presence to all sorrowing ones, and may those who are sick be ministered unto by the loving Saviour, who came to heal and to save. In His name we offer our petitions. Amen.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

John 17: 15–26

I PRAY not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

PRAYER

O THOU who hearest prayer, teach us how to pray. We praise Thee for this prayer of the Master for His followers. May the assurance that our Lord prays for us make us very strong in faith, and give us courage and strength in time of temptation. Conscious of sin and of our unworthiness, we may approach Thee in humble confidence, knowing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, intercedes in our behalf. May our hearts glow with love and gratitude as we contemplate our Lord praying that we may be with Him, that we may behold His glory. Holy Father, we thank Thee that fellowship with Jesus is never-ending. By Thy grace, we may have His companionship here, and hereafter we may be where He is, and behold His glory. Help us to live as those should live for whom Christ died and for whom He prays. We ask for Thy blessing upon every endeavor of Thy followers to obey our Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." We thank Thee for our family circle, for home, for our hope, and for all that brings gladness into our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PETER'S CONFESSION

Matt. 16: 13–21

WHEN Jesus came nto the coast of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto h m, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou sha t loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised aga n the third day.

PRAYER

WE praise Thee, our Father, for this revelation of Jesus Christ to Peter, and we are grateful for the fact that Thou hast made the Saviour known to us as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. We believe that Jesus is asking men today the question He asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" We devoutly pray for those who treat this vital question with indifference. May we realize more fully how many ways there are by which we can make Christ known as the Son of God. Thou hast made it possible for us to testify for Him every day we live, not only by what we say, but by the quiet influence of our lives. Forbid that we should hesitate to confess our Lord before others, and may our manner of life each day testify to our discipleship. O Thou Son of God, dwell in us and manifest Thyself through us. Bestow Thy blessing upon all agencies for making known the love of Jesus Christ. May they have the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit. To Thy loving care we commend all those who are dear to us. Wilt Thou keep them, and may Thy grace abound in their hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA

Matt. 14: 22–33

AND straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

PRAYER

MOST Merciful God, our Father, we thank Thee that we learn from Thy Word that Jesus so often went up into a mountain to be alone in communion with Thee. Teach us, we pray Thee, how needful it is for us to seek Thee in private. We have the promise that if we pray to the Father in secret, He will reward us openly. Help us to value family prayer more highly and to engage in it more earnestly and with greater faith. May we have a fuller sense of the value of the presence of Jesus. Alone on the sea of Galilee, the disciples were in great fear because of the wind and waves, but when Jesus came the wind ceased and the sea became calm. In darkness and storm, in the midst of hindrances that seem insurmountable, may we look to Him from whom cometh our help. Alone, we are helpless, but with the Saviour's presence our difficulties may be overcome. Our Lord and Master, give us grace to look for Thy presence in every time of need. Be pleased to hear and answer our petitions, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

THE WORD

John 1: 1–14

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we praise Thee that Christ is the Word of God, and that He is the revelation to us of the love and character of God. How great the condescension, that He should be made flesh and dwell among men! As the beloved apostle beheld His glory, full of grace and truth, so may we behold Him and find in Him the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. We thank Thee for the humanity of Jesus, that He left the glory which He had with the Father, and that as a man He experienced human weariness and hunger, human joy and sorrow, and the temptations that beset us. O that we might look to Him in our hours of need, and find in Him a very present help! May we never cease to praise Thee for the gift of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We offer Thee thanks, our Father, for all the blessings bestowed upon us as a family, for loving companionships, and for all the provision Thou hast made for our comfort and welfare. We give ourselves anew to Thee this morning, in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY

JESUS APPEARS TO PAUL

Acts 22: 6–16

AND it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

PRAYER

LORD God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, we thank Thee for Thy great condescension in not only permitting us to come into Thy presence, but inviting us to come. We approach Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and humbly implore Thy forgiveness of our sins. While we may not behold our Lord in bodily form, as the disciples of old beheld Him, we may have the light of His presence and hear His voice as truly as Paul saw and heard on his journey to Damascus. We thank Thee that Jesus manifests Himself to us and speaks to us in our everyday lives. Like Paul, may we ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" and may we hold ourselves ready for service in whatever manner we are called to render it. Thou hast appointed us work to do, and, remembering that night cometh, when no man can work, may we be faithful in the performance of the tasks assigned us. We need not work blindly, for we may ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" assured that Thou wilt answer our prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SATURDAY

FISHERS OF MEN

Matt. 4: 12–22

NOW when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

PRAYER

LOVING Father, may we believe that as truly as Thou didst say to those Galilean fishermen "Follow me," so hast Thou bidden us to follow Thee. We may not be called, as were they, to forsake our occupations in order to render acceptable service, but it is our privilege and duty to do what Thou dost bid us do and go where Thou dost send us. The fishermen straightway left their nets, and we pray for grace to yield as prompt obedience. How graciously Thy promise to make them fishers of men was fulfilled, and what joy they must have felt in being able to gain so many followers of the Master! May we ask ourselves, Are we fishers of men? Forbid that we should stand idly by, while others are gathering men into Thy Kingdom. Thou hast made possible many methods by which we may attract and win others for Thy service. Our example at home and in our places of business may point others to Thee, and we may, by a timely word or by a direct personal appeal, be Thy fishermen. We pray Thee, use us, Lord, in extending Thy Kingdom. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THANKSGIVING

Psalm 92

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:

To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.

For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of a unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. . . .

To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

PRAYER

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High; to show forth Thy loving kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night. When we consider Thy goodness toward us, and the countless blessings we have received at Thy hands, we may well offer grateful praise. Thou hast blessed us in our home life, and provided for all our needs. Thy gifts have been numberless and constant, and yet we are apt to forget the Source of the abundant blessings we enjoy. Forgive us our want of gratitude, we pray Thee, and accept the thanksgiving we now offer Thee. We praise Thee for the coming of Jesus Christ; for His unspeakable love, manifested in the giving of Himself for us. May Thy presence be made known this day to all who worship Thee in spirit and in truth. May Thy name be exalted in prayer and song, and may Thy Holy Spirit direct the messages Thy servants bring to Thy people, and Thy name shall be praised, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15: 11–24

AND he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. . . .

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

PRAYER

AGAIN, our Father, we have the privilege of communing with Thee in prayer. We ask for Thy blessing upon the portion of Scripture we have read together. Often during the day may we think of Thy fatherly love, as portrayed by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son. Deliver us from any desire to go beyond the restraints of Thy love, and keep us from doing those things that would separate us from Thee. We thank Thee that when we have strayed, Thou hast brought us to a sense of what we were forfeiting and to a longing to return. Thy loving kindness and tender compassion have been shown toward us when we have retraced our steps and sought Thee. Thou hast seen us afar off, and welcomed us with a Father's forgiving love. We entreat Thee, sanctify our desires, our purposes, and our lives, that we may abide with Thee and find joy in Thy presence. May no allurements take us where we cannot feel that Thou art near. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10: 27–37

AND he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. . . .

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neigh bour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

PRAYER

O LOVING Father, hear us, we pray Thee, as we come into Thy presence in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We thank Thee for Thy teaching concerning our duty toward others, and we pray that we may take to heart this parable of the good Samaritan. We are sometimes slow to respond to the needs of others when it will interfere with our own ease and comfort. We have need to learn that if we are really followers of the Master, we should strive to imitate His example. He gave Himself for us, and He has said that in ministering to those who are His, we are doing it unto Him. We pray for all institutions established for the purpose of relieving suffering and to afford healing to Thy needy children. May those who engage in these works of philanthropy be given sympathy and support. It may be that today opportunity will be given us to bring comfort and help to some stricken one. Teach us the joy of serving Thee by serving others, and may we strive to do all we can to bring joy into the lives of others. Hear us, we pray Thee, our Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN

Luke 15: 1–10

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

PRAYER

HELP us to be grateful to Thee, O Lord, for the joy of finding. We know that to find the lost may require diligent search. The one who lost the sheep went out after it until he found it, while the one who lost the coin swept the house until the treasure was found. We never can sufficiently praise Thee that our Saviour sought and found us. May we realize how far the joy of one sinner found exceeds the joy over the recovery of any earthly treasure. May the parable make plain to us what a joyful thing it is to tell others of the great treasure we have found in the love of Jesus Christ. Thou hast graciously given us something to do in reclaiming those who are lost, making us workers together with Thee. We entreat Thee, our Father, give us grace to seek earnestly and constantly for those who are lost, that they may be restored to Thee and to Thy love. May we never be so busy with other matters that we shall neglect striving to make disciples for the Master. In His name. Amen.

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10: 1–11

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.

This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . .

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

PRAYER

OUR Father in Heaven, we thank Thee this morning for this revelation of Jesus as our Shepherd, and that we can say with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my Shepherd." We have the Saviour's assurance that, as the shepherd knows each sheep by name, so He knoweth each member of His flock. We pray for grace to follow Him who is our Shepherd, wherever He may lead. The journey may sometimes seem long, and the way may be difficult, but we can always safely follow, and even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we will fear no evil, for Thou art with us. We beseech Thee, Lord, that we may ever hear the voice of Jesus calling us to follow Him. Keep us from straying in by and forbidden paths. The Great Shepherd of the sheep having laid down His life for the flock, we can never question His love or His tender care. We pray Thee, hasten the coming of Thy Kingdom, Lord, when men everywhere shall confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. In His name. Amen.

TWO COMMANDMENTS

Matt. 22: 34–46

BUT when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this message from Thy Word, for these two great commandments given by our Saviour. When we contemplate the love Thou hast manifested toward us, it should be a natural impulse for us to love Thee with heart and soul and mind. Help us to see that it is only when we so love Thee, that we shall be able to love our neighbor as ourselves. Thou art the Father of all, whether rich or poor, whether obedient or wayward, and all are Thy children. Bestow Thy grace upon us, O Lord, that our love for Thee may have a truer, deeper meaning, and that we may love others as ourselves. May our prayers and our lives be more unselfish. We cannot love Thee as we ought, nor can we love others as we should, unless we have the aid of Thy Holy Spirit. Our Father, we pray for the coming of the day when Thy will shall be done in the daily contacts of men; when they shall feel their dependence upon Thee, and upon each other. For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Mark 10: 17–27

AND when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, . . .

How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

PRAYER

OUR Saviour, teach us how to apply this lesson to our own lives and experiences. May we have the earnestness of this young man who came running and kneeled at Thy feet. We thank Thee, O Lord, that we can come to Thee with our questions, assured that Thou wilt answer them. We cannot of ourselves do anything to inherit eternal life. We cannot obtain it by sacrifice or suffering. Our Father, Thou hast taught us that it cannot be purchased, that eternal life is Thy great gift, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and that we may enjoy this great inheritance in this life and in the life that is to come. Keep us from placing our affections too much upon earthly things, and help us to regard ourselves as Thy stewards, and may all that we possess be consecrated to the service of our Lord and Master. We give ourselves to Thee, praying that Thou wilt rule our lives this day, and govern all our thoughts and actions. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

LONGING FOR THE SANCTUARY

Psalm 84

HOW amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob.

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

PRAYER

O GOD, our Maker and Preserver, we come into Thy presence with thanksgiving, we enter Thy courts with praise. We thank Thee for the Sabbath stillness, for the cessation from toil, for the day of rest. As the Psalmist voiced his longing for Thy courts, so may we express our longing for Thy house, and for the worship of the Living God. We praise Thee for the Church Thou hast established on earth. May Thy people dedicate themselves anew to Thee today. May they find it blessed to dwell in Thy house, and may they be able to say, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." We pray for a larger and better observance of the Sabbath, and that Thou wilt stay the tendency to desecrate it. Bless every assemblage of Thy people, and wherever the Gospel is preached may Thy Holy Spirit be present. Wilt Thou dwell in our thoughts this day and in our hearts, and may we receive a fresh impulse for right living and for active, consecrated service. For the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

WARNING AND INVITATION

Matt. 11: 20–30

THEN began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. . . .

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

PRAYER

OUR Father in Heaven, we cannot wonder that our Lord was grieved in beholding the wickedness of some of the ancient cities, and that He upbraided them for their want of regard for Him and for His teaching. We pray for the cities of our land, that those who govern may rule righteously, and that citizens may feel their responsibility and participate in the efforts put forth to overcome wickedness. We thank Thee that Jesus bids all who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him and find rest. We are sure that our cares and burdens are known to our Lord, and that He is ever seeking to lighten them, and that it is our blessed privilege to find rest and peace in Him. We are bidden to take His yoke upon us. Help us to see that in our taking His yoke upon us He shares it with us, and our burden becomes light. Our Father, help us to acquit ourselves today as servants of Jesus Christ, and may we meet each responsibility with an honest purpose to do well all that Thou dost give us to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

JESUS AT THE POOL

John 5: 1–9

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

PRAYER

OUR Lord and Master, may what we have just read teach us that our bodily ailments and infirmities are known to Thee, and evoke Thy loving sympathy for us. We think of the man who was a helpless cripple for thirty-eight years, and of the joy he experienced in being restored by the Saviour. We thank Thee that healing and strength come in the very doing of what Thou dost bid us do. We are weak and helpless, and are sometimes inclined to be despairing, but a look and a word from Jesus may give us faith and courage to attempt what has hitherto seemed impossible. We pray for grace to look less on our own weakness and to look more to Thee, who art our strength and our salvation. Give us strength of will, we entreat Thee, that we may undertake difficult tasks in Thy name, knowing that Thy grace is sufficient for us. Our Father, keep us today from fretfulness and worry, and help us to be gentle and charitable. Be pleased to answer our prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Matt. 13: 1–9

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for sunshine and rain, for seed time and harvest. We are commanded, "In the morning sow thy seed, and at evening withhold not thy hand." We also have the gracious promise, "He that goeth forth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again, bringing his sheaves with him." Help us, Lord, to receive Thy Word as precious seed, and may it yield abundantly in our lives. We have Thy promise, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and we know that this law in the natural world applies with equal force in the spiritual realm. May we remember that the harvest is in proportion to the sowing, and may we not be sparing in the sowing of good seed, knowing that with Thy blessing the yield shall be fruitful, to the glory of our Lord and Master. We pray for those who hold public office. Guard and defend them, and inspire them to render conscientious service. As Thy disciples, may we uphold and encourage them in every right endeavor. In Jesus' name. Amen.

JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

John 4: 43–53

NOW after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, for this word of hope and encouragement for all who come to Thee in behalf of those dear to them. We praise Thee that today, as really as when He walked among men, our Lord is ever ready to hear the troubled cry of parents for their children, whether it be for spiritual or physical healing. Truly Thou art no respecter of persons. The poor widow and the nobleman may approach Thee with like confidence in the divine love, and with the assurance that Thine ear will be open to the cry for help. Strengthen our faith, we beseech Thee, that when we pray for those we love, we may believe we shall have Thy loving response to our petition. We implore Thee, our Father, remember all who are lonely and sad. Give hope and courage to those who are suffering, and comfort and heal those whose hearts are broken with sorrow. Fill our souls with Thyself, and take from us any want of faith. Thou art able to do for us far more than we can ask or think. Hear us, we pray Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13: 31–51

ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. . . .

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

PRAYER

THOU who art the King of kings, we thank Thee for these parables of Jesus concerning Thy Kingdom. We are bidden to seek first the Kingdom of God, and we pray daily for the coming of Thy Kingdom. Thou hast heard the prayers of Thy people during the past centuries, and they have been wondrously answered in the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour has said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." We praise Thee for the compelling power of the cross of Christ. Give us a larger faith as we pray for the coming of Thy Kingdom. May we not only believe that Thy promise will be fulfilled, and that all men will be drawn to Thee through the atonement of Jesus, but may we do all we can to bring all nations and peoples into Thy Kingdom. We pray that Thy Kingdom may have a larger place in our minds and hearts. We ask Thee to rule and govern our lives. For the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

Matt. 20: 1–16

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. . . .

So the last shall be the first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

PRAYER

OUR God and Father, we bow before Thee with thankful hearts, and ask for Thy help today in all our undertakings. We seek Thy presence and Thy grace. Without Thee our duties would become drudgery, but with Thee we shall find joy in all that we attempt to do. May we hear the Lord speaking to us in the parable we have read. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are laborers in the Master's vineyard, and we rejoice in the great privilege of being workers together with Thee. Forbid that we should count the hours, or dwell too much on the reward, but rather may the assurance of Thy love spur us to diligent and faithful service. Thou art our Father, and as Thy children we would always be about our Father's business. May we not stand idle while opportunities for work in Thy name are so plentiful. Give us grace to aspire to that high plane of service that will make attractive the religion of Jesus Christ, and encourage others to follow Him. We pray for Thy guidance in all industrial relations, that men may be true to Thee and to one another. In Jesus's name. Amen.

LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE

Psalm 26

JUDGE me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.

Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PRAYER

O LOVING Father, as we enter upon another Sabbath we approach Thee with gratitude and thanksgiving. We seek Thy presence and help, that our souls may be refreshed as we worship and praise Thee. May we be able to say with the Psalmist, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." Graciously bestow Thy blessing upon all the churches of our land. Inspire Thy servants who preach Thy Word, and may Thy Holy Spirit direct each message. May Thy followers consecrate themselves anew to Thee this day, and to Thy service. Enlarge their faith, and guide all their efforts to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and to extend His Kingdom. We ask for Thy blessing upon the members of our family. As parents and children share in Thy rich blessings, may they also share in humble and devoted service. Hear us, we beseech Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

BORN BLIND

John 9: 1–11

AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, that, as Jesus passed by, the man born blind did not escape His notice or His loving sympathy. As we think of our Lord's interest in individuals and their afflictions, may we be led to consider those who so sadly need to be ministered unto. We ask for Thy blessing upon all agencies for the alleviation of the blind. Wilt Thou direct the efforts that are put forth to bring comfort and joy into the lives of those who are sightless. Grant unto us a fuller realization of what a blessing the gift of sight is: to be able to behold the beauties and wonders of the heavens and the earth which Thou hast created; to be able to look into the faces of loved ones and friends. We have consecrated to Thee our hearts and our hands; help us also to consecrate our eyes, that they may behold the things Thou wouldst have us see, and may be kept from looking at things to which they should be closed. We entreat Thee, our Lord and Master, for power to do our best in Thy service each day, and may no day pass that shall not bear witness to our devotion to Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE CHILD SAMUEL

I Sam. 3: 1–10

AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. . . .

And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

PRAYER

GRACIOUS and Most Merciful Father, we come to Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, through whom we have hope of everlasting life. We thank Thee that Thou dost call children to Thy service, and that Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." If the presence of children gladdens our hearts, how much more do they bring joy to the heart of our Heavenly Father. As Samuel responded to Thy call, and said, "Here am I," so may the children of our homes and households hear Jesus saying, "Come unto me," and make prompt response, saying, "Here am I, O Loving Saviour, take me into Thy service." We thank Thee for the faithfulness of those who sought and found Thee in childhood. God bless and save the children of our land. Save them from harmful influences in the home, in the school, and upon the street, and as they increase in stature may they grow in favor with God and man. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

GOD'S MEASURE AND MAN'S

Matt. 5: 38–48

YE have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we offer Thee our thanksgiving and praise for Thy Holy Word. We are grateful for all it has meant to us in the experience of each day. Thy Word has been to us a source of strength and courage. We have just read the command of Jesus, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." May we comprehend how different God's measure is from man's. We are sometimes called upon to render favors or service to others. Too often our response is half-hearted and reluctant, and we rarely go beyond complying with what is required of us. Our measure of kindness and helpfulness is limited. Thy measure is boundless, and each day we receive at Thy hands blessings far beyond our asking. Help us to treasure in our hearts and practice in our lives the lessons Thy Word teaches, and may we pray for and expect large things, for it is Thy good pleasure to give, not according to our measure, but according to Thy boundless love and goodness. Hear us, our Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Rom. 12: 1–9

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, Thy loving care has been over us during another night, and we enter upon a new day. May Thy blessing follow the reading of Thy Word. Teach us by Thy mercies that we should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. When we dwell upon Thy mercies, and we cannot number them, we may well exclaim, "What shall we render unto the Lord for all His mercies toward us?" Help us to see that our bodies belong to Thee. They are Thy temples, and we would dedicate them to Thy service. May our hearts be warm with love to Thee, our tongues be employed in Thy praise, our hands be extended in loving helpfulness, and our feet be swift on errands of mercy. We beseech Thee, control our thoughts, our words, and our actions, that all may be used for Thy glory. May we be of good courage if we meet with disappointment or misfortune, and may we so put on the Lord Jesus Christ that we shall be strong, and able to resist temptation. In the name of our Saviour. Amen.

JESUS CRUCIFIED

Luke 23: 35–46

AND the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

PRAYER

ETERNAL Father, in beholding Jesus on the cross may we more fully comprehend what He suffered in our behalf. "We may not know, we cannot tell what pains He had to bear, but we believe it was for us, He hung and suffered there." When we think of His great sacrifice for us, may we regard no sacrifice too great to make for Him. We may well glory in the cross of Christ, for it was there that He made the great atonement for sin, and gained for us the victory over it. We never can repay the debt of love we owe Him, but we can try to love Him better. We pray that our hearts may always be responsive to His wondrous love, and may our love for Him be made manifest each day by our devotion to His service. O Lord, help us to see that we may render acceptable service by performing faithfully the duties that are presented each day, whether they be great or small. We may make secular duties sacred by doing them well, and in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE HIDDEN CANDLE

Mark 4: 21–29

AND he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given.

For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

PRAYER

OUR Father, who art in Heaven, may we have a fuller sense of Thy goodness toward us. Goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives, and we will never cease praising Thee. Our Lord has said, "Ye are the light of the world." Help us to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Forbid that we should be as a candle put under a bushel, giving no outward light, but wasting itself unseen. It is our privilege to reflect that true Light that came into the world to shine in the hearts and lives of men. May the flame of the love of Jesus Christ never grow dim within us, but may it burn more brightly each day we live. We profess to be Thy followers, and may we seek opportunities for service, endeavoring to imitate our Saviour who went about doing good. Keep us this day from needless care and anxiety and shelter us from all evil. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

John 2: 13–22

AND the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

But he spake of the temple of his body.

When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, teach us, we pray Thee, not only to reverence Thy day but also to reverence Thy house. Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, forever. Forbid that we should go to church only because it is our custom to meet with Thy people, but may we go to worship Thee in prayer and in hymns of praise, and with a desire to commune with Thee. By the righteous anger of Jesus, may we see how displeasing it is to Thee for us to profane Thy temple by allowing things to enter that should find no place in Thy house. Keep us from carelessness of thought and from indifference, and may we be able to say with the Psalmist, "But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." We pray for those who long for Thy courts, but are denied the privilege of meeting with Thy people because of illness. May they realize that the heart is Thy temple, and that its courts and chambers may be filled with Thy presence. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

JESUS TEMPTED

Matt. 4: 1–11

THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and that He is able to succor those who are tempted. We may not escape temptation, but we can gain the victory over it. Our Lord met and vanquished the evil one by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Thou hast provided us with the same weapon, and we have need to pray that we may always have it at hand, and that we may not fail to use it when assailed by the enemy of our souls. We pray daily, "Lead us not into temptation," but too often we make but faint resistance when tempted. Grant us Thy grace, that we may avoid the things that lead in the way of temptation. We thank Thee for the promise that we shall not be tempted above that we are able to bear. With a firm and constant trust in Thy Word, help us ever to be on our guard, that we may be victorious, through Him who is the Captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION

Gen. 18: 23–32

AND Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place. . . .

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty. . . .

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

PRAYER

THOU who art from everlasting to everlasting, we entreat Thee, open our eyes that we may see the wonders of Thy Word. We thank Thee for this intercession of Thy servant Abraham. While we regard prayer as a great privilege, we sometimes engage in it with a want of earnestness and without persistence. May we know the meaning of prevailing prayer, and may the example of Thy servant of old encourage us to persist in behalf of others. Help us that we may have a larger faith, for we know that with faith all things are possible. We look to Thee for Thy blessing upon our home and upon all those who are within it. May it not only be our dwelling place, but a place where Thou dwellest, and where Thou dost rule. Keep us from unkind speech, and may a spirit of kindness and unselfishness govern our conduct today in all our relations with others. Guide us in all things, that we may glorify Thee. Hear our prayer, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Acts 8: 26–38

AND the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. . . .

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

PRAYER

OUR Father, help us to gather something from this lesson that will enable us to render Thee more faithful and constant service. Like Philip, we may be sent on errands for Thee. We need Thy grace, that we may be as prompt in our obedience as he was, and that we may not neglect opportunities fraught with great possibilities, though we may not see them in advance. We ask that Thy Word may be treasured in our minds, so that we may be able to use it to help others to find Jesus. We have need to ask ourselves often when we read Thy Word, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Forgive us that we sometimes read it carelessly, and help us always to regard it as the message of a loving Father to His children. Incline our hearts unto Thy testimonies, and may we be able to say, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Our Lord and Master, deliver us this day from worry and impatience, and help us to be gentle and charitable in our treatment of others. These petitions we offer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Acts 17: 16–29

NOW while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. . . .

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

PRAYER

O LORD God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, we thank Thee that we do not worship an unknown God. Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Thy Word as the God that made the world and all things therein. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the firmament showeth Thy handiwork. Thou art our Creator, and we are the offspring of God. We pray this morning for those who ignorantly worship unknown gods—idols of gold or silver or stone. We praise Thee for the light that has dawned upon heathen nations, and we pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed in every tongue and in every land, that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow. We remember before Thee the missionaries of the cross who are seeking to make the Saviour known in distant parts of our own land and in foreign lands. Inspire them by Thy Holy Spirit, and guide them in all their labors. We invoke Thy blessing upon all Christian institutions. May those who direct them find in Thee the required wisdom and grace for their important work. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

PAUL'S LAST WORDS

II Tim. 4: 1–11

I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

PRAYER

WE praise Thee, O God, for this glimpse of the life and character of Thy servant Paul. May we see as never before what a precious gift life is, how great its privileges, and how wonderful its possibilities for service. Help us to take the Lord Jesus Christ as our Leader. Then we shall be able to fight the fight of faith, and as true soldiers of Thine we shall be able to endure hardships, overcome obstacles, and win victories. We need courage and patience, and we also need to be equipped for conflict. May we put on the whole armor of God, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Forgive us that we have so often tried to overcome the adversary in our own strength and with our own weapons. In Thee, O Lord, do we put our trust; let us never be put to confusion. Be Thou our strong habitation, where we may continually resort. We would so loyally serve Thee, that at last we may be able to say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In Jesus' name. Amen.

STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE

I Cor. 4: 1–7

LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

PRAYER

WE beseech Thee, our Father, teach us how to pray, even as Jesus taught His disciples. Give us a clearer understanding of the word we have just read. We sometimes regard our opportunities as very limited, and we long for larger fields of service. Thou dost call only for the right use of what Thou hast committed to our keeping. We are Thy stewards, and all that we have and all that we are belongs to Thee. We know that it matters very much what use we make of the talents intrusted to us, whether they be few or many. We would consecrate ourselves and all that we possess to Thee and to Thy service. We praise Thee that it is possible for us to be workers together with Thee. Wilt Thou establish us in faithfulness and diligence, that when our work is finished we may hear our Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." May these blessings be bestowed upon us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LOVE OF GOD

1 John 4: 7–21

BELOVED, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. . . .

We love him, because he first loved us.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

PRAYER

OUR Lord and Master, with heart and voice we praise Thee this Sabbath morning. We offer Thee our thanksgiving for the message of love, spoken through Thy beloved disciple. We know there is no greater thing in the world than love. Thou didst first love us, and because of Thy great love Thou didst send Thine only begotten Son to be our Saviour. May our love for Thee be deeper, more sincere and constant, and may it find expression in the doing of Thy will each day. We ask that Thy love may govern in the lives of all those who are dear to us, and in our own lives. We pray that Thy Holy Spirit may inspire Thy servants who preach the Gospel of the love of Jesus Christ today, and may the messages be so filled with divine love that many shall be won to Thy service. May we have a closer walk with Thee during the hours of this day, that the Sabbath may be one of rich spiritual communion with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE DUTY OF WATCHFULNESS

Luke 12: 35–44

LET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

PRAYER

O GOD, Lord of Heaven and earth, we crave Thy forgiveness of all our transgressions. We are Thy children, and yet we are sometimes wayward and thoughtless. In Thine infinite love Thou hast borne with us in mercy and kindness, and we rejoice in a love so great and so unfailing. We pray Thee, fix in our minds the words of Jesus we have just read, and help us to see the importance of watchfulness. We need to remember that we are Thy servants, and that we are charged with certain responsibilities. We have work to do for the Master. Forbid that He should ever come and find us idle and forgetful of the interests committed to our keeping. May Thy grace enable us to be watchful concerning our conduct, that we may avoid hasty temper or speech. We need to watch lest the enemy of our souls, in an unguarded moment, shall entice us from the right path. We need to watch lest opportunities for doing good and of honoring our Master be neglected. We would be so watchful and faithful that we shall not fear the coming of our Lord. Wilt Thou bless and guide our rulers. Protect them by Thy might, and may they seek wisdom and guidance from Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE GREAT PROPHECY

Isa. 53: 1–9

WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, our Heavenly Father, whose goodness never faileth, as a family we unite our voices in praise and worship. We bow before Thee to express our gratitude for all Thy tender mercies toward us. Thou hast caused us to hope and trust in Thee, and Thy promises have never failed. We thank Thee for the wonderful prophecy concerning the Saviour, which we have just read, and for its gracious fulfilment. May it bring anew to our minds Thy great love in giving Jesus Christ Thy Son for our redemption. As we think of the great sacrifice He made for us, and of all that He suffered in our behalf, may we dedicate ourselves anew to Him and to His service. Give us a fuller comprehension of the matchless love of the Saviour, and help us to love Him better and to be more constant in our devotion to Him. May we manifest Him each hour of this day, by trying to carry out His spirit in all that we say and in all that we do. We sometimes sing, "I love Thy Kingdom, Lord." May we so love it that we shall do all we possibly can for its growth and prosperity in every part of the world. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

THE TEARS OF JESUS

Luke 19: 41–48

AND when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

PRAYER

O THOU King Eternal, we come to Thee because Thou art our Father and we are assured of Thy love. Thou hast promised forgiveness for all who humbly confess their sins. We come in the name of Jesus Christ, praying that Thou wilt remove our transgressions far from us, and that Thou wilt give us hearts in which the Holy Spirit may abide. We praise Thee that Jesus wept over the death of a friend, that He manifested His humanity in the presence of sorrow. What a comfort that has been to us in the midst of grief! We praise Thee, too, that He wept over a city, as He thought of its approaching destruction. We believe He is grieved as He beholds the wickedness in many of our cities today. Grant, we beseech Thee, that citizenship may mean more than it does to many. May it be seen that it involves responsibility, and may Thy followers in every city of our land strive for better conditions, that wickedness may decrease and that righteousness may prevail. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

HOW TO PRAY

Luke 18: 1–14

AND he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. . . .

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

PRAYER

O HOLY Father, incline Thine ear unto us as we come into Thy presence. We offer Thee devout praise for Thy great love toward us, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who has said that men ought always to pray and not to faint. We are bidden to pray without ceasing, and it is possible for us to be always in a spirit of prayer. Deliver us from doubt if answers to our prayers seem to be delayed. We thank Thee that our continual coming never wearies Thee. Teach us the meaning of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Help us to come before Thee humbly, and not to regard ourselves as better than other men, and therefore entitled to the blessings we seek. Rather may we come confessing our sins and shortcomings, praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," remembering that "every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE WATER OF LIFE

John 4: 5–14

THEN cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we bring Thee this morning our offering of praise for the gift of a Saviour, and we ask that He may ever be present in our home. When He walked among men He brought joy and peace to many a home, and He was ever a welcome Guest. May we gladly receive Him, and may He never depart from us. We thank Thee that while Jesus came to save the world He was so often pleased to talk with individuals, even with strangers. Grant that we may find a lesson and a blessing in what we have read concerning His talk with the woman of Samaria. Help us to see that our Lord is familiar with all the details of our lives; and may this fact make us very careful how we live, that our conduct may always be well pleasing to Him. We are thankful for His promise, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." We thank Thee, too, for the assurance, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." We would say with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Our Father, graciously direct all efforts put forth for the winning of men to Thy service, not alone in our own land but throughout the world. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE WITHERED HAND

Mark 3: 1–10

AND he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa,

And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

PRAYER

LIFT upon us the light of Thy countenance, our Father, that we may behold Thee, and greatly rejoice. Make us pure in heart, that Thy promise may be fulfilled in us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We pray that we may find a lesson for ourselves in the man with the withered hand. We think of him as helpless and almost hopeless, and yet, at the command of Jesus, he did what had before seemed quite impossible—he stretched forth his hand and it was restored whole as the other. Our Lord and Master, how often our hands seem helpless and useless. There is work for our hands to do, but they hang helpless. There is need to stretch out our hands in helpfulness to others, but we seem to lack power and strength. Many causes need helping hands, but ours are idle and useless. We dare believe, our Father, that Thou hast need for the work of our hands. O, help us to hear the voice of the Saviour saying, "Stretch forth thy hand," and with the command may power be given us to stretch forth our hands and use them in Thy name and in Thy service. We pray that the love of Jesus Christ may so prevail among men that distrust and suspicion shall cease, and men shall deal justly and kindly in their relations with one another. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

Psalm 119: 105–112

THY word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

PRAYER

ON the morning of this Thy day we offer Thee, our Father, the praise of our hearts and lips. During another week Thy goodness and mercy have been manifest in Thy loving care over us. We entreat Thee, forgive our mistakes, our forgetfulness of Thee and of the teaching of Thy Word. We thank Thee that we need not walk in darkness or uncertainty, for Thy Word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. What a gracious gift Thy Word is! How often we have found hope and joy in its blessed promises, and how it has comforted us in seasons of sorrow! We pray that we may have greater reverence for Thy Word, and that we may resort to it in times of temptation or difficulty. May we enter joyfully into Thy worship this day, and may our meditations of Thee be sweet. Grant that we may have fellowship and communion with our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. In His name. Amen.

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

Matt. 26: 36–46

THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

PRAYER

LOVING Father, it is fitting that we should offer Thee sincere praise and worship. Our hearts are stirred as we think of the suffering of Jesus in Gethsemane, and we are impressed anew by what He endured for us. Only by Thy grace shall we be able to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," when we come to Thee with our petitions. We pray daily, "Thy will be done," and we know that Thy will is always best for us. Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from relying upon our own wills, and help us to seek constantly to have Thy will prevail in our lives. We cannot always know what is best for us, but we can safely trust a loving Father to give what we most need, and to withhold the things we ask for if they are not for our highest well-being. Increase our trust in Thee, Most Merciful Father, and help us above all else to seek Thy glory, and we will ever praise Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

Exodus 14: 13–25

AND Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. . . .

And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians . . .

And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

PRAYER

BECAUSE of Thy fatherly care, O God, we are entering upon a new day. Accept the thanks we bring for Thy watchfulness during the hours of sleep. Impress upon our minds and hearts the portion of Scripture we have just read. We praise Thee that Thy real Presence accompanied Israel, and that Thou didst reward the faith of Thy servant, by removing what seemed impossible barriers and turning threatened defeat into a glorious victory. In our journey of life, how greatly we need Thy presence and guidance! We are constantly meeting difficulties and discouragements that cannot be overcome by our own wisdom and strength, and we can face and conquer them only by divine aid. Grant us Thy presence this day, and, trusting in Thee, we may be strong and of good courage. We ask for Thy loving kindness to be shown toward all those who are dear to us. Hear our prayer, O Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

BELIEVING AND DOING

James 2: 14–26

WHAT doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. . . .

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

PRAYER

GRACIOUS Lord and Master, we approach Thee with minds that are devout, and with spirits that are contrite. We dare believe that Thou didst expect us to come, for Thou hast graciously invited us to enter Thy presence and make known our desires. Help us to a clearer understanding of the Scripture we have read. We know what an important thing faith is, even in our everyday dealing with others, and that in the spiritual realm it is impossible to please Thee without faith. Keep us from placing too much value upon works, for we realize that there is little merit in what we do, and that only by grace are we saved. We beseech Thee, increase our faith, for we know that all things are possible to him that believeth; and help us to work unceasingly in the cause of our Master. We praise Thee that Thou dost never fail us. Thou art a never-failing source of help and strength. Live in us, and manifest Thyself in our lives, that we may be full of faith and good works, and the praise shall be Thine, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE FORGIVING SPIRIT

Luke 17: 3–10

TAKE heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, our Father, we thank Thee for the wonderful teaching and the gracious example of Jesus in the matter of forgiveness. With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful. Thou hast taught us by Thy Word and by our own experience that the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. We pray daily to be forgiven as we forgive, and yet we sometimes lack a spirit of forgiveness toward those who offend us. Help us to be patient and considerate toward others, and keep us from unkind judgment. Thou hast not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great has been Thy mercy toward us. We praise Thee that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. Remembering Thy patience and forbearance, may we have the spirit of our Master in our attitude toward those who need our forgiveness. We commend to Thy loving care all the members of our family circle. Hear us, we pray Thee, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

Acts 16. 25–34

AND at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

PRAYER

OUR Father in Heaven, we cannot hope to avoid things that cause perplexity and pain, but it is our great privilege in every trying hour to turn to God, who is able to give us a tranquil mind and a gentle spirit. We thank Thee for the example given us in Thy servants Paul and Silas, who, though beaten and imprisoned, prayed and sang praises at midnight. We praise Thee that even in their pain and suffering they preached Christ, and were the instruments in Thy hands of bringing salvation to the jailer and his household. Thou didst not only give them grace to endure, but Thou didst also give them deliverance from prison. Enable us, O Lord, to maintain our loyalty to Thee and our trust in Thee, in whatever circumstances we may be placed. Wilt Thou order all the events of our lives, and, though we may not always understand Thy dealings with us, may it be sufficient for us to know that a loving Father is so directing, that all things shall work together for good. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE GRACE OF GIVING

II Cor. 8: 1–12

MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. . . .

Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

PRAYER

THOU Giver of all good, may this lesson we have read be remembered by us. We rejoice in the liberality of the early Christians, and we pray that we may have grace to try to follow their example of generous giving. Our Lord Jesus Christ, though He was rich, for our sake became poor, that through His poverty we might become rich. We pray that the giving of ourselves to Thee may be so real and complete, that it will not be difficult for us to give of our means for causes that will advance Thy Kingdom. May we not measure our giving by what others give, but rather by the need and by our ability. We would have willing minds and give as the Lord has prospered us. Help us to regard giving, like praying, as an act of worship, and may we give in such a manner as will be well pleasing to Thee. To Thee we consecrate our minds, our hearts, our time, and our means, praying that all that we have and all that we are may be used for the glory of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Amen.

REJOICING IN GOD

Psalm 95

O COME, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, help us to sing praises to Thee, to make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. May Thy people draw near Thee in every act of worship: in the preaching of the Word, in the reading of the Scriptures, in audible and silent prayer, and in the hymns of praise. Look with pity upon those who fail to comprehend the divine purpose of the day, and help us all to realize more fully how much we need the Sabbath day for the renewal of our strength, both spiritual and physical. We pray for the presence of Thy Holy Spirit in every worshiping congregation, and may many be led to seek the Lord Jesus Christ. We beseech Thee, dwell in us, and help us so to live that our influence may always be for good. Teach us the power of example, and forbid that we should say or do anything that will hinder others from following Thee. We would ever show forth Thy praise. Hear us, we entreat Thee, in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

MAKING EXCUSE

Luke 14: 15–24

AND when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

PRAYER

OUR Lord and Saviour, to whom shall we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we praise Thee that the way is ever open for us to approach God. May the Holy Spirit inspire our petitions, that we may pray aright, and that our seeking may be in accordance with the divine will. We thank Thee, our Father, for the gracious word, Come, so often uttered by our Lord. Help us to heed it, and keep us from beginning to make excuse. We sometimes excuse ourselves from the performance of important duties, for reasons no more valid than those given in the parable we have just read, and thus forfeit blessings that might have been ours. May Thy grace enable us to make ready response to the invitations of our Saviour, whether they be to commune with Him, or to perform some service in His name that we should gladly render, no matter what sacrifice may be called for. Keep us, our Father, from making excuses when Jesus bids us, Come. For His sake. Amen.

THE FIERY FURNACE

Dan. 3: 16–25

SHADRACH, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. . . .

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

PRAYER

OUR God and Father, truly Thou art able to deliver those who put their trust in Thee. Teach us, we pray Thee, from this Old Testament record of Thy faithful followers, that though we may be called upon to suffer fiery trials, we may be sure that the divine presence will enable us to endure them. Help us to be so loyal and true to Thee, and so firm in our refusal to violate our sense of what is right, that others may see that we have the companionship of the Son of God, our Saviour. We are weak and need Thy presence and help. We know not what the events of this day may be, what difficulties we may meet, what temptations may assail us. It may be that opportunities for service will be presented, service that may require self-sacrifice. May we have grace to meet every hindrance with courage and with faith in Thee, and may no chance for doing good be neglected. We beseech Thee, be Thou our Guide and our strength. Teach us the meaning of Christian citizenship, that we may make our civic duties sacred by performing them faithfully, and with an earnest desire for the good of others. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

I John 5: 1–15

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? . . .

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

PRAYER

WE extol Thee, Thou who art the King of kings, as we humbly bow in Thy presence. We have nothing to commend ourselves to Thee, but in calling upon Thy name we are responding to the gracious invitation of a loving Father. We thank Thee for this testimony of Thy disciple John concerning prayer, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." We praise Thee, this has been our experience, too, concerning prayer, and we have learned that when we ask according to Thy will, Thou dost graciously answer our petitions. Thou dost bestow Thy favor upon us even beyond our asking. Accept our grateful thanks for the many unasked blessings we have received at Thy hands. Our Lord and Master, increase our confidence and trust in Thee and in Thy Word. We commend our loved ones to Thy keeping, praying that Thou wilt deliver them from all evil. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE WALK TO EMMAUS

Luke 24: 13–29

AND, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. . . .

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. . . .

And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel . . .

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

PRAYER

OUR Father, who art in Heaven, we cannot read of this walk to Emmaus of Jesus and the two disciples without wishing we might have shared the companionship of the Master. As Thou didst teach these disciples, so wilt Thou teach us that when we journey we may have the presence of the Saviour, and that when we walk in sadness He is at hand and will walk with us. May our hearts burn within us as our Lord opens to us the Scriptures and makes plain the things concerning Himself. We cannot but think how great a blessing the two disciples would have missed had they not invited Jesus to enter and abide in the home. Our Lord and Master, we entreat Thee, abide in our home, and make it a place where Thy presence will ever be welcome. Walk with us today, and help us to feel Thy nearness and Thy readiness to give help and strength. Our Father, we ask all in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

James 3: 1–10

MY brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

PRAYER

WE pray, our Father, that we may be taught the lesson we should learn from the portion of Thy Word we have read. Thou knowest how difficult it sometimes seems for us to control our words, and how often we have said things that we wish had never been uttered. Thou hast given us our tongues, as well as our hands and our feet, and we believe Thou wilt hold us responsible for the use we make of them. We thank Thee for the power of speech: that it is possible for us to glorify Thee with our tongues. May they never be employed in a way that will bring pain to others, and may we remember that a word spoken in kindness may sometimes prove a balm to one in trouble, while a cruel word may cause infinite sorrow to some sensitive one. Keep our hearts aglow with Thy love, that our tongues may not be unruly members. Our Lord and Saviour, have us in Thy keeping this day. Defend us from harmful influences, and give us the strength and courage to be true to Thee. For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

THE TESTING OF FAITH

Matt. 15: 22–31

AND, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

PRAYER

ON bended knee we call upon Thy name, Most Merciful Father, seeking a morning blessing. We ask Thee to bless the members of our household at the beginning of another day, that every duty may be faithfully performed, and that each hour may be profitably spent. We thank Thee for the privilege of prayer. May we never make use of it in a thoughtless or indifferent manner. Forgive us that we sometimes ask for a blessing and fail to expect it. Keep us from discouragement when answer to prayer seems long delayed. It may be that we need to have our faith tested, as the faith of the woman of Canaan was tested. Then wilt Thou give us grace to persist, with greater earnestness and faith, assured that our prayer shall be answered. Then we may have the blessing we seek, and the added joy of the Saviour's commendation, "Great is thy faith." We pray that each day we may experience the joy of service, and may Thy Holy Spirit guide us in all that we attempt to do in the name of Him who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

TWO SABBATH INCIDENTS

Matt. 12: 1–13

AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? . . .

But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

For the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath day. . . .

And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we thank Thee for the blessed privilege of coming into Thy presence. Purify and cleanse our hearts, we pray Thee, and direct us in all that we undertake in Thy name today. We need not be in doubt as to what to do, or what to refrain from doing on the Sabbath. We have Thy commands and the example of our Saviour to guide us. First of all, wilt Thou give us a sincere desire rightly to observe the day; so to spend it that we shall feel that in no hour of the day have we been without the companionship of Jesus. As He went about doing good on the Sabbath, so may we not let the day pass without some work of mercy or some word of helpfulness. We cannot please Thee with mere forms of religion, but we can render real service to Thee by striving to serve others in Thy name. Help us to be drawn nearer Thee in worship and praise, and may we be glad and rejoice in Thee. We would yield to Thee the control of our hearts and minds, that in our lives may be seen the spirit of our Lord. Hear us, in His name. Amen.

HEARERS AND DOERS OF THE WORD

Matt. 7: 21–29

NOT every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

PRAYER

OUR Father, we come before Thee this morning with gratitude for Thy loving kindness toward us. Refreshed with rest and sleep, we begin the day praying for Thy presence and guidance. Help us to remember the words of Jesus, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." We need to be reminded that something more is required of us than merely professing to be Thy followers; that the real test of discipleship is obedience, the doing of Thy will. Forbid that we should be hearers of Thy Word only, and not doers. Forgive us that we so often hear Thy Word without heeding it. Open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. We pray that our faith may be established on a firm foundation, the Rock, Christ Jesus, and then nothing can prevail against us. Each day Thou dost give us new opportunities for service. May we not be found wanting if, led in ways of Thine, we are called upon to practice self-denial. We beseech Thee, our Father, that the peace on earth and good will to men, proclaimed in the angels' song, may be realized. May social unrest give place to trust and confidence and good will. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

I Sam. 20: 30–42

THEN Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. . . .

And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. . . .

And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another until David exceeded.

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.

PRAYER

WE thank Thee, our Father, for human friendships, and for all they have meant in our lives. We look upon one who is friendless as being deprived of one of life's richest blessings. We are grateful for the friends Thou has given us, for their loyalty, for their wise counsels, and for the joy and comfort their friendship has afforded us. Help us to be friends to those who are in need of friendliness, and forbid that we should do anything to forfeit the friendships we have made. We cannot sufficiently praise Thee that we have a Friend in Jesus, who is our best Friend—One who sticketh closer than a brother. We have His assurance, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." What blessedness, to be the friends of the Son of God, to whom we may go with our troubles and difficulties, and seek His guidance and help! We would not knowingly cause a friend pain or sorrow. How much more should we strive to avoid doing anything that will grieve our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Hear us, in His name, we pray Thee. Amen.

THE JOY OF SERVICE

Matt. 25: 31–40

WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

PRAYER

OUR Father and our Friend, we sometimes wish that we might have been among those who ministered to our Lord when He walked among men. How gladly we would have shared the privilege of being near Him, and anticipating His every wish! We praise Thee, a still greater privilege is ours: we can always have Him with us, and with the eye of faith we may behold Him, and He may become very real to us, by our ministering in His name to those who are His needy ones. We realize our need of the spirit of our Master, that we may be more ready to render loving service and to speak words of cheer to those who are less fortunate than ourselves. May we be more willing to sacrifice our own comfort, our own time, and our own means, in behalf of those whom we may serve. We give Thee thanks for the promise of the coming of the Son of man in His glory. May we have grace so to live that when that great day shall come, we may hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." We ask for Thy blessing upon the industrial interests of our land, that the desire to serve one another may be uppermost in the minds of men. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PETER'S DENIAL

John 18: 1–9, 25–27

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. . . .

And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

PRAYER

O LOVING Father, when we think of Peter's denial and of his sad fall, may we also think of his later victory over himself. Teach us, we pray Thee, to avoid over-confidence in ourselves, for we know that we are subject to temptation, and that only by Thy grace and strength shall we be able to overcome. When we are disposed to think that we never could have done what Peter did, may we realize our own danger, and remember that we are not always ready to confess Jesus. Thou knowest, O Lord, that we sometimes show our lack of friendship for our Master by separating ourselves from Him and by going where we cannot be in His company. Deliver us from a spirit of self-assertion and of self-satisfaction, and help us to realize more fully our weakness and helplessness. May we come to know Jesus better, and to depend upon Him more completely. May we yield to Thee the control of our thoughts and our actions, and may we never be ashamed to confess our Saviour before men. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LOVE OF GOD

John 3: 14–23

AND as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, our Father, we praise Thee, we worship Thee, we magnify Thy Holy Name, for this great truth that came from the lips of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thou art a God of love, Thou didst first love us, and because of Thy great love we have this precious promise of everlasting life, through the gift of Jesus Christ. We never can be worthy of such a wondrous manifestation of love, nor can we show sufficient gratitude, but to such a loving Father we can yield obedience and offer the worship of our hearts and of our lives. Grant us grace to bear witness to Thy great love, by our thought of others, by our gentleness and forbearance, and by self-sacrifice and devotion. As we remember Thy great gift to us, may we hold nothing too precious to give to Thee. We pray that our love for Thee may be so deep and sincere that it shall find expression every day of our lives. For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

John 12: 1–11

THEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, we pray that as Jesus was ever a welcome guest in that Bethany home, so may He ever find welcome in our home. May it be more natural for us to think of Him and talk of Him, and recognize His presence in the home, and may His presence glorify our home life. We cannot, like Mary, bring a costly offering for the anointing of our Saviour, but we can make manifest our love for Him in ways that will be as well pleasing to Him. May we imitate her by offering the best we have to our Lord, and nothing that we possess is too costly or precious to lavish upon Him, when we think of what manner of love He has shown for us. Keep us from counting the cost when some sacrifice seems to be demanded for our Lord's sake, or for the sake of those who are His. We thank Thee, our Father, that Thou hast called us to discipleship. We are but learners; teach us by Thy Holy Spirit the meaning of life, that we may fulfil Thy purposes concerning us. We pray for the devoted men and women who are working and praying in behalf of foreign missions. Wilt Thou graciously reward their labors and prayers. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

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